

1980

The Work of Brian Sullan in Relation to Contemporary Non-Objective Painting, 1979-1980

Brian Sullan

Eastern Illinois University

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THE WORK OF BRIAN SULLAN IN RELATION TO
CONTEMPORARY NON-OBJECTIVE PAINTING, 1979-1980
(TITLE)

BY

BRIAN SULLAN

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN ART

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1980
YEAR

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**THE WORK OF BRIAN SULLAN IN RELATION TO
CONTEMPORARY NON-OBJECTIVE PAINTING, 1979-1980**

BY

BRIAN SULLAN

B.F.A. IN ART

ILLINOIS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY 1979

ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in Art
at the Graduate School of
Eastern Illinois University**

CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1980

393054

The purpose of this thesis is to explain my current body of work in terms of both personal interpretation and by means of relating it to ideas associated with a modern philosophy in painting that focuses on the relationships between the formal elements of line, space, color, and form, called "non-objective" painting. Painting becomes a statement about itself and the way in which paint is manipulated over a given surface. By disregarding traditional concepts of painting, the artist comes into contact with his emotions in a more direct way.

The first half of the paper is devoted to an explanation of ideas associated with contemporary non-objective painting and the role that the modern artist has assumed in carrying on the development of painting in an historical sense. These ideas are supported and made more specific through the discussion of three contemporary painters who have influenced my own work: Thornton Willis, Jake Berthot and Richard Diebenkorn.

The second half of the paper focuses on my personal interpretation of the ideas presented in the first half, by explaining my own work and comparing and contrasting it with the work of the three artists previously mentioned.

I conclude the paper by noting that my approach to painting is not the ultimate means to an end, simply one of the alternatives. A final statement refers back to the beginning of the paper in stressing the uniqueness of contemporary painting and its revolutionizing of the use of color as a pictorial means.

Color illustrations follow along with the text and present examples of my own work and the work of Willis, Berthot and Diebenkorn.

Brian Sullan
April, 1980

Painting has been and remains one of the most common and direct forms of human expression. It has endured changes in the sociological, political and physiological milieu, but because it is an essential tool in fulfilling man's creative urges, it has survived. It is in a state of flux today as the boundaries of artistic freedom continue to be tested. My own personal attention is focused on the need to create as an individual and on an interest in the development of painting as a viable art form.

My recent paintings are a result of research, imagination and intuition, as well as the skill developed through an ongoing learning process governed by time and experience. These works are a departure from previous dealings with objects depicted in a conceptual three-dimensional space. In response to a growing concern for dealing with basic fundamentals involved in painting, I have opted to work in a "non-objective" style that provides a more direct avenue for the analysis of the elements involved.

Non-objective is a term that has gradually come into use to refer to painting that disregards "traditional" concepts in favor of deeper understanding and use of the basic painterly elements of color, line, space and form, which are dealt with in a direct way. The painting consequently becomes an objective statement about the relationships of these elements through placing added emphasis on the materials and the process involved. This is in direct line with the concerns of the "modernist" painter, who sees painting as a statement "about painting". The concept of referring to a painting as an actual object instead of a means to an end has become a serious idea. Traditional concepts of painting are involved in an attempt to transcend materials and process.

Traditional styles of painting have promoted the use of the picture plane as a window that depicts three-dimensional space, be it real or imaginary. The paint, brush, and canvas are seen as merely the means used to transfer the illusion of three-dimensional space to a two-dimensional surface. Non-objective painting no longer looks through the picture plane at something else, but is involved with the arrangement of materials on the surface. Illusionary space is still created, but only through the inherent characteristics of paint and its application.

Contemporary non-objective painting is a synthesis and expansion upon ideas introduced within the last thirty years; it is a reconciliation between the emotional action painting of the fifties and the reactionary reduction methods of the sixties. In the words of Barbara Rose, modern painting is in the business of "isolating a post-abstract expressionist current which continues to introduce new variables and to innovate -- albeit at a slower rate and less dramatically than in the past."¹ This synthesis of styles is aimed at creating a style of painting that is formalistic in structure but still emotional in content.

A recent article on a contemporary painter named Paul Rotterdam emphasizes the barriers modern painters face in carrying on the development of painting: "Reintroducing emotive content within a modernist structure indicates a tradition in this decade (the seventies) which combines the previous two decades. The sublime motives of the painters of the fifties, Abstract Expressionists such as Mark Rothko and Jackson Pollack, seem, in work such as Rotterdam's, to combine with the reductive questioning of sixties artists such as Frank Stella and Kenneth Noland. These artists of the sixties appear to have adopted the formal structures of an artist like Rothko while avoiding the inexplicable

1 Rose, Barbara. "The Politics of Art, Part IV", Arts Magazine, Dec. 1979, p. 132.

things that were said. Now it is up to an entire generation of painters to explore the sublime black hole, to give forth paintings that refuse to compromise content for structure. These paintings must also refuse the sensuous self-indulgence that led painters like Rothko and Pollock to death. These new painters must confront the void, the black hole, and refuse to be sucked in. They can do so because, through modernism, they have acquired the cerebral distance with which to view this content".²

From an historical viewpoint I think this helps to explain intentions in my own work. I am trying to develop a style that involves a certain amount of intellectual thought and decision-making on one level, but in actual practice is primarily intuitive. A further explanation of these ideas is reflected in the thoughts of another contemporary painter named Thornton Willis, who utilizes the manipulation of paint to build up a very intuitive image (Fig. 1). All of his paintings are similar in format but each one has its own unique qualities. In a recent magazine interview Willis explained his ideas and related his concepts involved in the approach to a non-objective style. The following statements taken from the article are addressed from a personal viewpoint, but carry a broad range of understanding:

"I want to stay away from painting with an image because I want to make paintings that are about the development of an abstract statement. I want it to remain close to the very nature of the thing itself. It is difficult to describe because it's so simple really. Everything is, in a pure sense, about itself. Painting is something we make up. Abstract painting is not about illustrations, as that is a literary concern. When you get close to the thing it has to be abstract."

² "Paul Rotterdam", Art International, January 1979, p. 25.

Fig. I

Thornton Willis

Bisby

1977

acrylic on canvas



"Success or failure depends upon the ability to use line, color, form and space in a certain kind of balance. That's what making a painting is all about. The real break from traditional painting came when there was an understanding of a painting as an object, a special object, not without spatial illusion, but the idea is to make it very present as opposed to something that is looked into, like a window. It is the idea of trying to avoid holding up a mirror to nature. As a result, painting has become more introverted and a much more introspective activity. We're trying to get at emotions in a different way."

"Color is an immediate avenue of expression. Still, each element in a painting must come up together intuitively in the painting."

"Automatic development of brushwork becomes an activity through which an emotional buildup of the statement is conveyed."

"The image develops as the painting develops. It can go in a number of different directions and I have no preconceived attitude. I don't set out to paint a particular image. It just develops. I find the painting emotionally charged and yet I never see them as anything more than the pure statement of the material. I don't see them as referring to anything outside themselves."

"Painting is a political statement; in order to be able to paint in an individual manner requires a great deal of freedom."

"I'm interested in painting as a means to a kind of transcendence. Painting is, in a sense, a way to escape boredom or transcend it. What one does is put oneself into such a state that you're very close to your own emotions, which are universal. You find this avenue of expression through this thing you've learned to manipulate, which in my particular case is painting. Altered states of consciousness put you in tune with

your emotions, which I feel is necessary in painting."³

Again, in these statements is seen the importance of the balance between intellectualism and intuition. A set of unique ideas is created that is not outside conventional concepts, but simply narrows the range of its concerns down to nothing more than a statement of the interaction of the materials involved. No matter how narrow its range of concerns, modern painting has become the subject of much discussion involving both formalistic and psychological theory. Much of this has been forced upon the scene by critics and art historians. Although the artist is still responsible for his own actions, critical theory is still necessary to help us separate and assimilate the broad range of artistic intentions. Contemporary painting is especially important now because it ties the past to the present. The future development of painting rests on its conclusions.

A painting entitled Raft, done by a European artist named Jake Berthot, exemplifies the relation of modern painting to both the old and the new. This is a universal painting that has several subtle implications despite its seemingly "crude" appearance (Fig. 2). Even though this work was included in a show of a new movement called "Fundamental" painting, which "focuses on a limited aspect of painting and stressed an iconography of self-referentiality",⁴ it starts to head away from this trend to read more as a figurative landscape. The painting's use of a large color field through which the paint is worked over the surface is reminiscent of Monet's large Water Lilies. This is only fitting since Monet was one of the first to look beyond actual subject matter and focus on pure paint and color manipulation over an entire surface. "The ascendancy of the Water Lilies over so much of modernist painting is well known. For one

3 "An Interview with Thornton Willis", Arts Magazine, Nov. 1979, pp. 116-17.

4 Kasher, Steven. "Jake Berthot's Recent Work", Artforum, Sept. 1978, p. 68

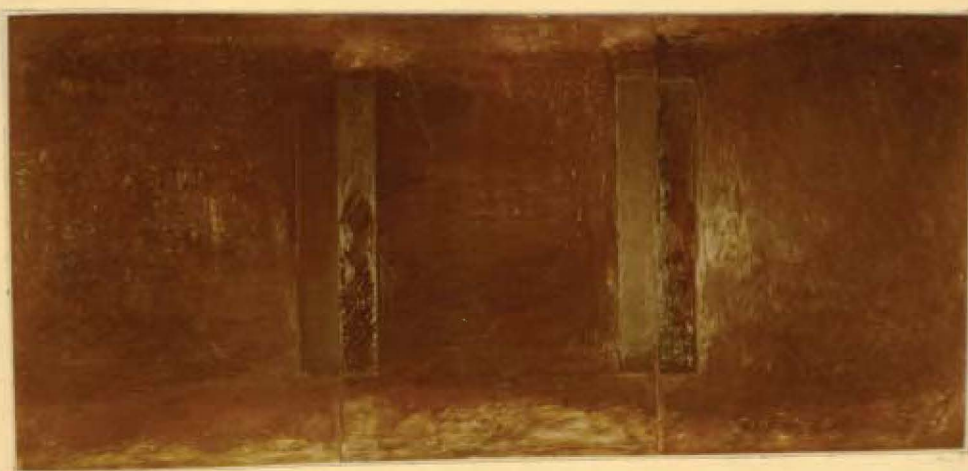
Fig. 2

Jake Berthot

Raft

1975

oil on canvas



thing, the pond is such a cogent of modernist painting; it is an alternative to the mirror or window metaphor -- two other plans that have stood surrogate to the picture plane. Like the mirror, the pond reflects planes: the clouds, the trees. Like the window, it reveals planes: the subaqueous. But unlike either, it does not itself remain invisible in coalescing other planes. The modernist picture plane is like the pond in pressing its own exigencies into the equation.

A landscape is a realm of diversity, a conjunction of things in the round. A landscape painting is thus a plane of diversity. Monet's pond, both a thing in the round and a plane, was an intermediary negotiating the two. The pertinence of the remarks is this: Berthot in 1975 chose radically to unflatten the picture plane. In moving toward 'unflatness' he doesn't plunge directly into the full realm of things, the landscape, but wades into the intermediary realm of Monet's pond."⁵

Although Raft acknowledges Monet's influence, Berthot has learned more from Cezanne: " 'Cezanne paints a painting without designing it, more so even than Monet'. Designedness has become a disparaged thing among painters. It connotes an obliviousness to plasticity, touch, viscosity, lubricity -- painters' concerns. A designer measures, balances and demarcates, all in two dimensions and because he concentrates on two dimensions, he impoverishes color in ignoring its spatial ambiguity. Despite appearances, Berthot has always striven to transcend the design mentality through paint."⁶

5. Kasher, pp. 68-9.

6 Kasher, p. 69.

The main reason for Berthot's inclusion here is his ability to defy the two-dimensional surface without having to rely on traditional three-dimensional subject matter. He is ultimately aware of the various "weights" of each element involved, and incorporates a feel for painterly "distance". The four bars that hug the edges of the three-paneled Raft almost act as figures in a landscape, but through their subtle handling, their spatial relation to the rest of the painting is ambiguous, and vice-versa. One seems to sense each set of bars either coming forward or receding within an atmospheric space, but the density of the paint sets up an opposite tension through its apparent flatness. "The key concept for Berthot's recent work is what he calls 'painted space'. This dovetails with the notion of 'pictorial space', and (Phillip) Guston's phrase, 'metaphysical space'. First of all, such space mediates between ideal flatness and the full roundness of the world. Secondly, it is an ambiguous space, wherein precise relationships fluctuate. However, Berthot makes it clear that this space is not flaccid and he is always striving to make it 'solid'. Toward effecting this solidity he employs a 'concern with distancing, the distance of things'. He adds: 'To measure distance I need form, something concrete.' "7

No matter how ambitious Berthot's work seems to be, his paintings would never work without a successful development of color. "The drawing and composition are nothing without the color. That the plane may be defined by the diagrams is irrelevant; it takes color to define the space. Colored space engages eye-body-mind contact in measuring -- an exacting quest for the exact measure of necessity, a craftsman's long and patient manipulation with internalized measuring tools."8

7 Kasher, p. 69

8 Kasher, p. 71

Continuing the basic themes I have already expounded upon, it is important to include here one more artist who has had a strong influence on my own work, that being Richard Diebenkorn. Diebenkorn's career has spanned over thirty years and has undergone two minor shifts in style, minor because he had to make little adaptation in moving back and forth between figurative and abstract styles. His latest change back to abstraction is centered around the ongoing Ocean Park series, begun in 1967.

They are named after the area of California in which his studio is located, giving rise to the use of the so-called "California light" that is consistent throughout the series. Again, fitting Diebenkorn into a non-objective framework we can see these latest paintings are concerned with the overall qualities of paint surface, and are totally abstract in appearance, although they are still considered continuations of his life-long interests in landscape and atmospheric qualities. And like all of his previous work, they retain a "hand-made" look and a sensitive feel for paint that is essential in keeping to not only a natural reference, but a painterly one, and thereby avoiding a machine-like "slickness". Paintings like Ocean Park #67 (Fig. 3) show the high degree of intuition involved within a highly structured framework of lines and color. In these works "thin, semi-transparent layers of pigment -- mostly 'natural' low-intensity hues -- are put into a framework of sketchy charcoal drawing, vertical in emphasis and abstracted from the beach architecture of Ocean Park in Santa Monica. The drawing is subsumed, or nearly so. Corrections are made: areas scraped and repainted, new color layers added, new drawing -- in charcoal and with a brush, to reaffirm the motif. The surface remains thin, yet advertises very visibly the history of its growth. Since nothing is hidden from us, our perception of a painting is also the perception

Fig. 3

Richard Diebenkorn

Ocean Park 67

1973

Oil on canvas



ot its means and method. We cannot help but recognize the extended time of its making."⁹

Although he has done over a hundred paintings in this series, each one is realized as an individual experience and has its own unique variations. The success of each work depends on how well the artist strikes the right kind of balance between color, composition, and spatial tension. This usually involves the use of large, subtle areas of color contrasted against smaller, more detailed areas of activity. While the right kind of formal balance is necessary, the paintings reach their true potential through the development of Diebenkorn's painterly handwriting. "Here, frequent 'pen timenti', overdrawn and overpainted areas, are left visible across the work and are integrated into the entire experience of its creation, eventually reinforcing the linear structure as well. This temporality which points to the time it took to paint the work aligns Diebenkorn with the action-oriented Abstract Expressionists (e.g. Pollock and DeKooning), while the banding, resulting from the linear structure and prevalent luminosity, moves closer to the static, tonal hierarchies of color field (e.g. Rothko, Newman). A continual dishotomy ensues between intellect and control on one hand, and spontaneity and invention on the other."

"Nonetheless, the success of the Ocean Park works depends totally on the painter's careful intuitive handling of the self-imposed limitations of his method."¹⁰

I feel my own style of painting is a combination of many of the ideas that I have already presented. The more painting I do, the more I am able to subjugate my influences and make my own personal ideas come forward.

9 "Diebenkorn at Ocean Park", Art International, Feb. 1972, p. 34.

10 Buck, Robert T., Jr. "The Ocean Park Paintings", Art International, Summer 1978, p. 33.

The beginnings of my current concerns can be seen in a small painting done near the beginning of the fall term 1979, entitled Composition 2 (Fig. 4). The concerns in this come closer than any paintings I have done since, to Jake Berthot's ideal of painted space. The painting is dominated by a green color field of varied surfaces, most of which were applied with a palette knife; since then I have relied solely on the use of brushes to apply the paint, but I would like to experiment with the knife further in the future. The top, bottom, and middle horizontals break up the composition and help focus in on the spatial relationships. The central point of the painting is the horizontal created by the blue and pink bars in the middle of the composition. The thickness of their paint buildup forces them to come out the farthest in space of any other elements in the work. In a sense then, they are similar to the bars in Berthot's Raft in that the rest of the painting seems to maneuver around them. The top horizontal section of alternating red and green forms is cut off from the rest of the painting, as is the bottom section. Their positions also tend to come forward in front of the color field and they seem to read as being more "solid", as do the bars in comparison to the fluidity of the remaining space. There was no preconceived idea involved with this painting; most of it was done in one sitting. Though it was spontaneous, the ideas started in this painting have been expanded upon in subsequent works.

In Composition 4 (Fig. 5) is seen the formulation of my current approach to the aforementioned concepts. This painting is still handled in terms of pure color and spatial relationships, but the composition has been organized into a very structured format. Geometric shapes and horizontal banding provide a consistent base for the interplay of color and stroke. The end result was one of formalism and emotional content

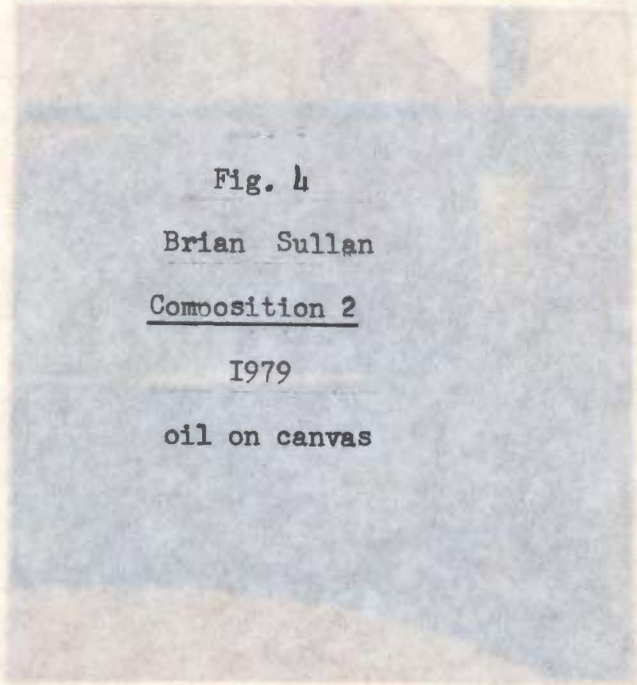


Fig. 4

Brian Sullan

Composition 2

1979

oil on canvas



Fig. 5

Brian Sullan

Composition 4

1979

oil on canvas



in the way sensations are induced by the individual colors working as a whole. This enables the viewer to treat the painting as one unit while his eye is drawn inward to certain individual areas. Composition 4 is dominated by a yellow-green color key, with sections of red, orange, and brown nuances used to break up the space, thereby preventing the painting from flattening out if just one color key were used. This sectionalizing of color and the incorporation of vertical and diagonal edges sets up a rhythmic pattern that contributes to the compositional success.

The paint application in this work is kept thin as to allow for greater interaction between each layer of color, which also creates a feeling of atmospheric depth in some areas. The sections that are painted more solidly tend to come forward. Areas that are reworked or changed as such allow previous colors to show through, which creates a look of luminosity when certain colors react together, or when lighter colors are superimposed over darker ones. The qualities of light obtained by the layering of color was partially learned from Diebenkorn's Ocean Park series, they exhibit this intention. My paintings do not seek a direct tie to nature, but a feeling for natural color cannot be avoided subconsciously, since one deals with the environment in some way or other on a day-to-day basis. Any concerns for light and atmosphere in my work however, come as a result of color experimentation.

In Composition 4, as is the case with succeeding works, there is an incorporation of just as much drawing with the brush as there is painting, especially around the edges of each section. Drawing aids in the definition of areas in relation to each other, while fluid painting provides each area with color and spatial content. Each section also seems to be assigned a certain kind of "weight" that makes the overall composition hang in a subtle balance. This leads back to the idea of

"distance" between elements of a painting done in terms of "painted space."

Composition 7 (Fig. 6) reaffirms the continuing motif started in Composition 4. The unique difference in this work is that there is a more pronounced use of transparent color areas that overlap each other in different stages. The composition underwent three major changes, all of which can be seen in some way. The first stage was laid down in areas of yellow ochre and red, over which was painted variations of blue and green. The final stage reaffirms the dominance of red and orange. Every time a new color is added edges are exposed and various openings are left to insure a dramatic use of several colors in the final result instead of just one or two. In order to make paintings of this kind work it is important to show some of the history of its making. Each new layer also reverses or changes the directional lines of the various edges, so that the completed painting is set up in a rhythmic pattern of both covered and exposes edges.

This painting is another example of the luminous effects created by the interaction of color. Colors that would be uninteresting by themselves seem to come alive when they are placed either next to or on top of certain other colors. An example is the large central area of pink that is made effective by the cast of light blue underneath it. The effect created by direct comparisons of complementary colors (i.e. red and green, blue and orange) is useful in giving the painting a vibrant quality.

Another unique difference in this work is the use of the dark red border that frames the central area of activity. This is a strategy used to help unify the color while it adds a strong structural support for the internal painting. Even the lattice that frames the painting is painted the same color red to aid in the reading of the painting as an

Fig. 6

Brian Sullan

Composition 7

1980

oil on canvas



entire object in itself.

Composition 8 is the latest painting done to date (Fig. 7). It somewhat reverses the method used in the previous painting in that it does not overlap various stages of paint that continually changes the composition, but focuses on one preconceived format throughout. Nevertheless, the process of layering color remains the same within each area. Application of each layer is controlled so as to allow some exposure of previous colors; again, the building up of lighter colors over darker or less intense areas creates an effect of luminosity. Despite the lack of a painted border, the painting is kept from spreading out by the way the paint is drawn up to the edges of the picture, but never completely out. The finished painting is far different from the original conception, as it underwent certain changes in both color and composition.

To reiterate a key concept I have mentioned throughout this paper, the paintings I undertake would not be successful without effective color relationships. In thinking and working with color I am not so much concerned with it theoretically, but more in terms of intuitive feelings about the relationships of one color with another and as a whole. I do not painstakingly mix every color I am going to use before I start a painting because there is no way to know what colors will work until I actually do the painting. The key to the process is color modulation; using a color that will work well with the ones already established, or changing established colors to work with new ones. Above all, improvement in working with color this way comes only through experience. Since non-objective painting has rejected conventional representation, its subject matter becomes color, not just the use of it. "Sequences slip away while others form; color becomes an ungraspable, sheerly optical

Fig. 7

Brian Sullan

Composition 8

1980

oil on canvas



property while at the same time possessing a vibrant abstract presence."¹¹

The structural geometry I use in my work is common to much of modernist painting because it provides a simple, direct way of dealing with ideas. Although I have mentioned that I am not influenced directly by nature, I do think I have developed a feel for a man-made urban environment. As my perception of the everyday world has increased the more I begin to find meaning in things such as sidewalks, streets, sides of buildings, windows, etc., and the textures, lines and colors that characterize them. It is the implicit geometry and sense of order in this environment that takes on intellectual and symbolic form in painting. The attempt to make some kind of perfect order out of things has been part of what painting in this century has been about. I don't see this in my painting as an attempt to make some kind of social or political statement, but as an analyzation of the world in an abstract way.

As in Diebenkorn's Ocean Park series, no matter how much I may be affected by the environment, it is still more important to keep a painting within the painterly realm and keep the process of painting foremost. So, like Diebenkorn, I feel it is necessary to establish some sort of painterly "handwriting" that is formed by the way the paint is handled on a given surface. In my case this involves a loose handling in order to allow for a greater interaction of colors and a feeling of depth where areas are changed or reworked. Part of the message imparted by these works is that human activity is directly involved, so a handmade look essential to signify the artists' involvement with the materials. Variations in paint application are important in giving a painting a certain character or emotional impact; the thickness and quality of paint,

¹¹ Moffett, Kenworth. Kenneth Noland. Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, New York, 1977, p. 86.

and direction and type of brushstroke, or other means of application, come very much into play.

I agree with Thornton Willis' statement that painting is a "means to a kind of transcendence". Even though I have been working within a consistent format, I view each painting as a separate experience, each with its own challenges and unique intuitive qualities. The more painting I do, the more I see it going beyond subject matter and coming more into contact with my personal feelings; not real emotion such as we define it, but an understanding of your thoughts as they are transferred onto the canvas. It is the emotion of personal preference in making decisions regarding something you are actively involved in.

It is important here to differentiate between subject matter and emotional content. Subject matter is what the painting is about --- in my case, geometric shape and color. Emotional content is what the artist feels about that subject matter; "his conception, and his imaginative, felt choices of color, texture, proportion, and edge, and above all, the relationships between these."¹² Thus in my painting the emotional content lies in the tensions and feelings created by the formal relationships. More generally, it is also about getting back from a painting what you put into it, and about the freedom of choice involved in making a work of art that is unique.

I do not want to end a discussion of my paintings without a brief mention of my drawings. Through the use of oil pastel I have found a way to incorporate the concepts behind my paintings into a drawing format. Since there is no involvement of any fluid medium, the act of drawing is the only method employed; therefore, though they have the look of

my paintings I regard them as separate, finished pieces of work.

Drawing #6 (Fig. 8) is an example of how color and space are utilized in similar fashion to the paintings by concentrating two or more colors within each area. But since oil pastel is too hard-edged a medium to allow for transparent overlays the drawings are forced to rely on more solid, built up color. Due to the use of shorter strokes they appear more compact than the paintings, which tend to spread out more due to a more fluid quality.

The content of this paper has been devoted to explain the development of a personal style that has evolved within the past year. It goes without saying that I still have a long way to go in reaching a truer understanding of the ideas with which I have become involved. I do not claim this approach as the ultimate means of emotional and formal expression, but it is one of the alternatives. I hope to remain open to other forms of artistic expression and to learn from them. It is only to my present set of concerns that this paper is addressed.

As a final note, I wish to reemphasize the ideas expounded upon at the beginning of this paper, and place in perspective the uniqueness of painting as an art form, and more specifically, the way that contemporary painting has revolutionized it, and changed the traditional use of color as a pictorial means. "One might indeed call the creation of color painting a project, a historical project that could occupy not just one or a few artists, but many artists over an extended period of time. And it does seem that historical projects of this sort -- at least in intensely individualistic periods such as our own -- call forth artistic creativity and emotional content in a way that other artistic innovations, like the written novel and photography, do not. Other forces are at work as well. The drive toward pure color, like the impulse

Fig. 8

Brian Sullan

Drawing 6

1980

oil pastel
on paper



to flatness, can be seen as no more than a direct response to function and use. Modern society asks of painting only that it be art, that it fulfill no other need than an aesthetic one. And modern 'authenticity' proscribes that the picture itself declare this fact. Now the pure aesthetic viewing of a picture as a picture involves a special mental set, a just and even distribution of detached attention, a nonpurposive, more optical and flattening way of seeing in which the visual field itself structures what is seen. This is the attitude that every artist takes up as he narrows his eyes and steps back from his work in an effort to assess the overall distribution of visual weights, to savor the pictorial unity of his painting. Since no other social tasks or requirements are placed on painting, it is no surprise that in the long run and with many twists and turns painting has shaped itself to conform with this purely aesthetic way of seeing."¹³

¹³ Moffett, p. 32.

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